



Regarding oil, all in U.S. are facing a crisis

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The current oil crisis has prompted Governor Pataki and the Legislature to offer various proposals to reduce our consumption of oil. They wisely focus on alternative energy sources such as ethanol, biodiesel, hybrid vehicles, and solar and wind power.

The governor's recent energy plan justifiably concentrates on reducing imported oil. The transportation sector consumes about 66 percent of the total amount of oil used in the state, and 87 percent of the oil consumed in the state comes from foreign countries. We are faced with a crisis that affects our personal finances, economy, environment and national security.

What is sorely missing from the governor's and legislative proposals is one of the fastest and most effective strategies to reduce oil consumption: the offering of commuter benefits to commuters. Commuter benefits include telecommuting, compressed work week, transit subsidies, rideshare matching, flex hours, etc.

The governor could set an example by offering commuter benefits to all state employees, propose state tax incentives for employers to provide commuter benefits (federal tax incentives already exist), and have the state cooperate with the U.S. EPA's "Best Workplaces for Commuters Program," which actively and successfully encourages employers to offer commuter benefits. It is surprising that the governor, with his exemplary environmental record, has not implemented this strategy.

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